



\$1,000 SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION ENGAGES NEW VOTERS HS Seniors To Identify Urgent U.S. Issues and Innovative Solutions

For Release 3/22/10

Contact press@ourvoiceourcountry.org

Our Voice Our Country's **New!** national \$1,000 Spring Scholarship Competition will begin on Monday, March 22nd, continuing through Monday, May 31st.

Those competing at this new, non-partisan website will summarize what they believe to be America's most urgent national problems. They then research and invite experts in relevant fields with achievable solutions to post an outline, completing student entries.

Through this process, new voters and other users can clarify which issues concern them most, can support solutions they believe in, on and off OVOC, and will be more likely to vote for candidates whose platform includes attention to these issues.

This past Summer and again in Fall-Winter the educational non-profit site held its first two Competitions, during which 711 students from colleges across the Country (as well as 1,279 other users) posted articulate 'Topics' (urgent national problems). Since June, 141,000 from every State have visited OVOC and 22,000 have created log-in accounts.

The resulting, unfiltered content shows that Americans have deep concerns about a range of issues -- and that 'ProblemSolvers' (experts in relevant fields -- most gaining a national platform to be heard for the first time) whom they nominated through research have innovative solutions to put on the table. This problem-solution connection is just one aspect that sets OVOC apart from sites that only 'get people talking' about issues.

See Competition information and rules at: www.ourvoiceourcountry.org/participate/scholarship.aspx?ReturnUrl=participate/scholarship.aspx

Click links to view articles about the Summer and Fall-Winter Competition winners:

http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci_13301618?source=rss

<http://nevadasagebrush.com/blog/2010/02/16/student-wins-national-scholarship/>

Competitions at OVOC have seeded a process wherein the site will aggregate Americans' most urgent Topics and ProblemSolver Solutions, bringing the majority's authentic, non-partisan guidance to key leaders in Congress, once the site goes into full operation.

Here's what Walter Cronkite (an advisor and supporter in the development of OVOC) had to say about the timeliness of this project:

"this is indeed the right time for the voice of the people to be heard, the will of the people to be done, and for Americans to become an informed electorate." Walter Cronkite



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Summer Competition winner Kelsey Price (University of Utah) identified instability in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) region of Pakistan as an urgent problem for America, and she chose a former police chief in the region, Dr. Hassan Abbas (Kennedy School of Government/Harvard, Asia Society, Columbia University) as a 'ProblemSolver' to articulate a plan of action.

Tammy Johnston (University of Nevada/Reno) won the Fall-Winter Competition for her entry 'Educating The Poor.' Johnston has first hand knowledge, having grown up in poverty and through recent work as a teaching assistant. Johnston's experience enabled her to be a ProblemSolver, suggesting 'Educational Enterprise Zones' as a solution.

Other noted entries have called for federal protection of Wetland areas to reduce climate change; for better training of nurses and doctors to improve health care; and for required mental health screening/treatment of soldiers returning from battlefield zones -- to reduce violent incidents related to post traumatic stress disorder.

Competition judges have included:

- Mindy Fullilove, Columbia University Professor and noted social science researcher
- Jim Ramstad, former House Republican (1992-2008) from Minnesota
- Brian Nickerson, Dean at Iona College and a public policy specialist
- Charles Bass, former House Republican (1994-2006) from New Hampshire

Click below to view over 1,900 *Recommended Topics* and *ProblemSolver Solutions* posted by scholarship competitors *and* other members of the general public since June.

Topics: www.ourvoiceourcountry.org/participate/recommend-topic-rate.aspx

Solutions: www.ourvoiceourcountry.org/participate/solution-propose-rate.aspx

As part of OVOC's central focus on American Popular Movements, summaries and resource lists by noted historians are being added at the research page that help users gain context and understanding of the relevance of our history to the issues we now face. Participants include **Thomas Fleming**, writing about *The American Revolution*; and **Robert Nelson**, writing on *The Abolition of Slavery*, with more to be added soon!

"Add my name to your list of supporters, as I greatly admire your efforts to engage young people in public service.

- Jim Ramstad, Republican Member of Congress (1990-2008)

"The website is amazing..I love the concept, purpose and faith it shares with everybody."- User comment



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Site Info

www.ovoc.org provides the opportunity for all Americans to express their concerns, and gives visibility to those ready to provide answers. Public ratings of entries clarify 'what flies' in the court of public opinion. OVOC was collaboratively developed over the past 6 years, with endorsements and guidance from: Walter Cronkite, Ruby Dee, Joanne Woodward, Yolanda King, Jane Alexander, judges, professors, lawyers, students, senior citizens, soldiers, current and retired politicians, leaders of national non-partisan organizations and dozens of blue and white collar workers of all political parties and beliefs, from across the Country.

To learn more about OVOC, please visit the 'about' page at www.ovoc.org

Press contact for OVOC staff -- please call (914) 772-0472

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